

HAZARDOUS WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK

CONTINUES THROUGH FRIDAY

TODAY'S TOPIC IS HURRICANES AND FLOODING

THE FOLLOWING HAZARDOUS WEATHER TOPICS REMAIN TO BE DISCUSSED:

-TODAY	HURRICANES AND FLOODING
-FRIDAY	TEMPERATURE EXTREMES AND WILD FIRES

...OVERVIEW OF THE 2008 SEASON...

THE 2008 HURRICANE SEASON RETURNED TO THE LONGER TERM TREND OF AN ACTIVE SEASON, HAVING 16 NAMED STORMS, WITH 8 BECOMING HURRICANES AND 5 BECOMING MAJOR HURRICANES. THE ONLY STORM TO HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WAS TROPICAL STORM FAY. THE MAIN IMPACT FROM THIS SYSTEM WAS TORRENTIAL RAINFALL, WITH SOME LOCATIONS OVER SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AND THEN LATER OVER NORTH FLORIDA RECEIVING OVER A FOOT OF RAIN. TWO OTHER STORMS HAD AN INDIRECT IMPACT ON OUR WEATHER, MAINLY VIA MINOR COASTAL FLOODING AS HURRICANES GUSTAV AND IKE TRAVELLED WEST TOWARD LOUISIANA AND TEXAS.

FOR FULL DETAILS ON THE 2008 HURRICANE SEASON, GO TO THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:

NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER DETAILED SUMMARIES:
[HTTP://HURRICANES.GOV/2008ATLAN.SHTML](http://hurricanes.gov/2008atlan.shtml) (NO WWW!)

AND CLICK ON THE STORM NAME FROM THE LIST.

...HURRICANE DANGERS...

HURRICANE INTENSITY IS EXPRESSED BY RELATING WIND SPEEDS AND POTENTIAL DAMAGE. THE SAFFIR-SIMPSON SCALE RANGES FROM CATEGORY 1 (MINOR TO MODERATE DAMAGE) TO CATEGORY 5 (CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE). THE CHANGE FROM ONE CATEGORY TO THE NEXT IS EXPONENTIAL, NOT LINEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, A CATEGORY 4 HURRICANE WILL NORMALLY CAUSE MORE THAN 100 TIMES THE DAMAGE OF A CATEGORY 1.

TORNADOES ARE A COMMON OCCURRENCE WITH LANDFALLING HURRICANES. MOST OCCUR WITH THE OUTER RAIN BANDS, AND DEVELOP WHEN FRICTIONAL CONVERGENCE INTERCEPTS THE ROTATING PRECIPITATION AREA. HURRICANE-SPAWNED TORNADOES ARE GENERALLY LESS INTENSE AND SHORTER LIVED THAN THOSE IN ROTATING SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS. HOWEVER, THEY CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT WHILE ENSHROUDED IN TORRENTIAL RAIN.

HURRICANE FORCE WINDS CAN EASILY DESTROY POORLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS AND MOBILE HOMES. LIGHTWEIGHT OUTDOOR ITEMS (SUCH AS LAWN FURNITURE), ROOFING MATERIAL, AND POORLY FASTENED SIGNS CAN BECOME MISSILES IN A HURRICANE. TREES AND POWER LINES SUSTAIN EXTENSIVE DAMAGE IN ANY HURRICANE, AND DANGEROUS STORMS (CATEGORY 3 AND HIGHER) CAN CAUSE LONG-LASTING DAMAGE TO URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE.

THE FOLLOWING ARE HIGH WIND PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN NOW BY ALL RESIDENTS:

- FIND OUT IF YOUR HOME MEETS CURRENT BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGH WINDS. STRUCTURES BUILT TO MEET OR EXCEED CODE HAVE A SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER CHANCE TO SURVIVE.
- PROTECT YOUR WINDOWS BY INSTALLING COMMERCIAL SHUTTERS, PREPARING 5/8 INCH PLYWOOD PANELS, AND/OR INSTALLING HURRICANE WINDOW FILM. BE SURE TO ALSO INSTALL ADEQUATE FASTENERS OR ANCHORING DEVICES.
- IF YOU DO NOT LIVE IN A MOBILE HOME, DESIGNATE AN INTERIOR ROOM WITH NO WINDOWS AS A 'SAFE ROOM'.
- BRACE GARAGE DOORS TO WITHSTAND HURRICANE FORCE WINDS. GARAGE DOORS ARE OFTEN THE FIRST FEATURE OF A SINGLE FAMILY HOME TO FAIL.
- ASSESS YOUR LANDSCAPING, THEN PREPARE IT. THIS INCLUDES TRIMMING DEAD WOOD AND WEAK BRANCHES FROM ALL TREES AND CUTTING DOWN ANY DYING OR DEAD TREES AND BUSHES. IF LANDSCAPING, CONSIDER MATERIALS OTHER THAN GRAVEL OR SMALL ROCKS.

STORM SURGE IS THE GREATEST THREAT TO LIFE AND PROPERTY ALONG THE IMMEDIATE COASTLINE WITH A LANDFALLING HURRICANE. STORM SURGE IS CREATED WHEN A HURRICANE'S STRONGEST WINDS BLOW ONTO THE COAST AS THE STORM'S CENTER MOVES ONSHORE. AS WATER BECOMES SHALLOWER CLOSE TO THE BEACHES, THE WATER PILES UP AND IS DRIVEN INLAND. HOW MUCH SURGE WILL OCCUR AND HOW FAR INLAND IT WILL PUSH DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING THE STRENGTH OF THE HURRICANE, ITS FORWARD SPEED AND THE SHAPE OF THE COASTLINE. HOWEVER, THE EFFECTS OF STORM SURGE DECREASE RAPIDLY AS YOU MOVE INLAND. THIS IS WHY IT IS ESSENTIAL TO KNOW YOUR EVACUATION ZONE AND TO FOLLOW ORDERS FROM LOCAL OFFICIALS WHEN THE SUNCOAST IS IN DANGER OF STORM SURGE.

FRESHWATER FLOODING IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE THAN HALF THE FATALITIES FROM TROPICAL CYCLONES IN THE UNITED STATES. INLAND FLOODING CAN BE A CATASTROPHIC THREAT TO COMMUNITIES WELL INLAND

FROM THE COAST AS TORRENTIAL TROPICAL RAINS PERSIST AND THE WATER DRAINS AND COLLECTS INTO AREA LAKES AND RIVERS.

THE FOLLOWING ARE FRESHWATER FLOOD PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN NOW BY ALL RESIDENTS:

- LEARN YOUR VULNERABILITY TO FLOODING BY DETERMINING THE ELEVATION OF YOUR PROPERTY.
- EVALUATE YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE; AS DEVELOPMENT CHANGES, SO TO FLOOD PLAINS. IF YOU ARE IN A FLOOD AREA, CONSIDER WHAT MITIGATION MEASURES YOU CAN TAKE NOW.
- IF YOU LIVE IN A FLOOD PRONE AREA, ACQUIRE MATERIALS SUCH AS SANDBAGS, PLYWOOD, PLASTIC SHEETING, LUMBER, SHOVELS, WORK BOOTS AND GLOVES. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE TO LEARN HOW TO CONSTRUCT PROPER PROTECTIVE ELEMENTS AROUND YOUR HOME.
- TEST DRINKING WATER FOR POTABILITY; WELLS SHOULD BE PUMPED AND TESTED AS WELL.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT HURRICANE SAFETY AND FLOODING, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

[HTTP://WWW.FLORIDADISASTER.ORG/KIDS/INDEX2.HTM](http://WWW.FLORIDADISASTER.ORG/KIDS/INDEX2.HTM)

[HTTP://HURRICANES.NOAA.GOV/PDF/HURRICANEBOOK.PDF](http://HURRICANES.NOAA.GOV/PDF/HURRICANEBOOK.PDF) (NO WWW!)

[HTTP://HURRICANES.GOV](http://HURRICANES.GOV) (NO WWW!)